

SPECIAL
◆ STUDIO ◆

JOE ZABEL • GARY DUMM

1

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Modern PULP





PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTION: Cleveland-based Joe Zabel and Gary Dumm are best known for their regular contributions to Harvey Pekar's **American Splendor**, but their efforts as a team have included many little-known suspense/science-fiction/horror stories. With *Modern Pulp* you will see two of these exciting tales, both reprinted from Joe and Gary's mini-comic of 1989 called **January Midnight**. This mini was self-published by them under the imprint Graffix Noir.

Both stores have also been expanded for this publication — 8 new pages were added in total, as well as a new cover. The back cover of *Modern Pulp* is a color version of the cover for *January Midnight* #2. Both covers were colored by Joe Zabel.

More of Joe and Gary's B & W work will be seen in a movie adaptation mini-series called *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, coming soon from Eternity.

Joe and I have discussed a second issue of *Modern Pulp*, so this issue may not be a one-shot for long. Whenever #2 comes out you can bet it will carry the same outrageous imagination and roller-coaster energy that you are about to experience.

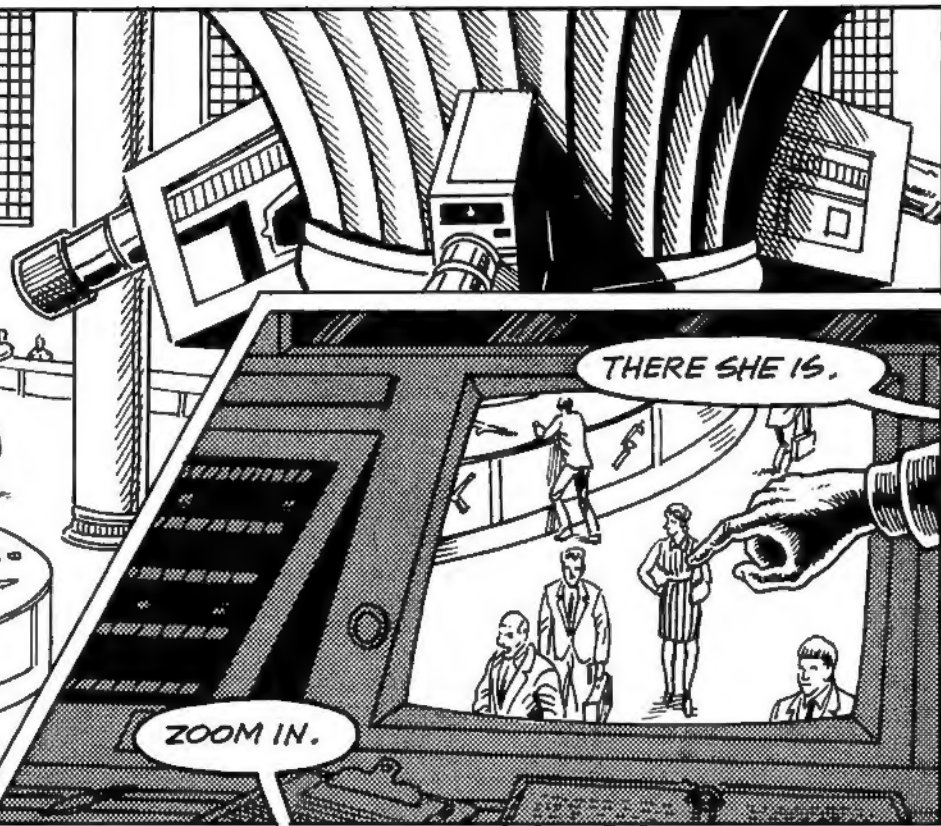
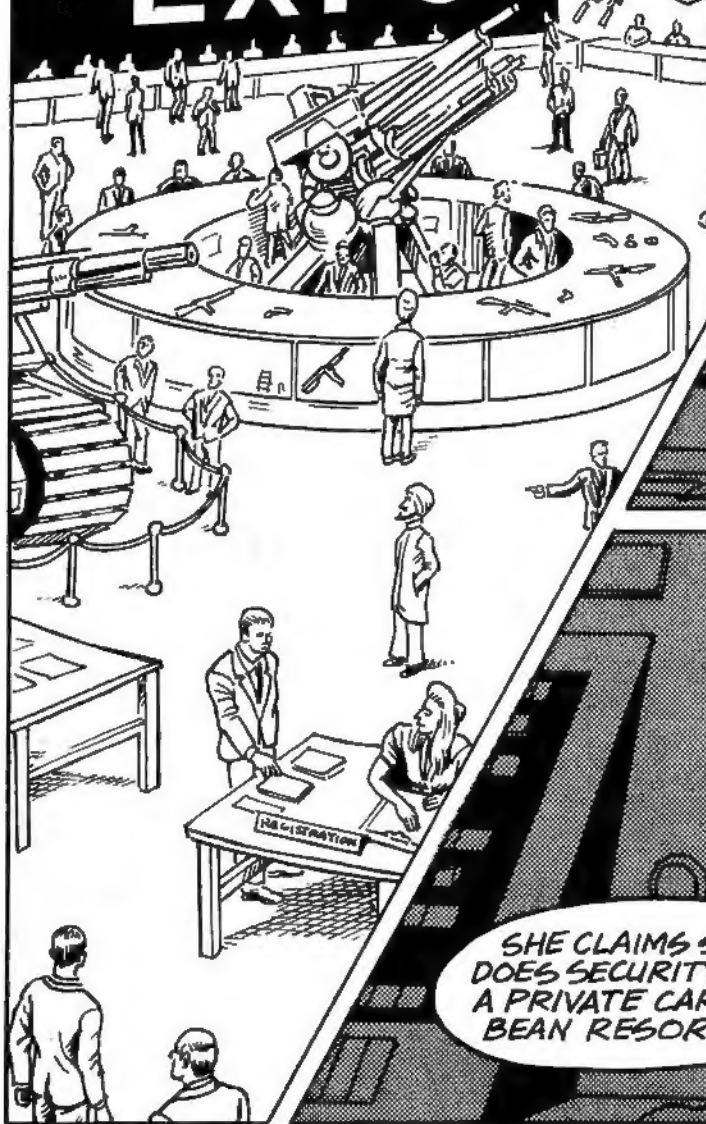
Modern PULP

Modern Pulp #1, January 1991 is published bi-annually by **Special Studio**, a division of Diamond Press. 25 1/2 Chatham Street, Brantford, Ontario, CANADA, N3T 2N7. All rights reserved, © 1991 Joe Zabel. Comic magazine contents © 1991 Joe Zabel and Gary Dumm.

The stories, the incidents and the characters portrayed in this publication are entirely fictional. Any similarities to persons living or dead and/or institutions is coincidental.
PRINTED IN CANADA.

PROLOGUE:

ZARATHUSTRA'S DEFENSE EXPO



SHE CLAIMS SHE
DOES SECURITY FOR
A PRIVATE CARIB-
BEAN RESORT.

GOOD CREDENTIALS.

VERY SMOOTH
WITH THE QUESTIONS,
LIKE IT'S JUST IDLE
CHIT-CHAT.



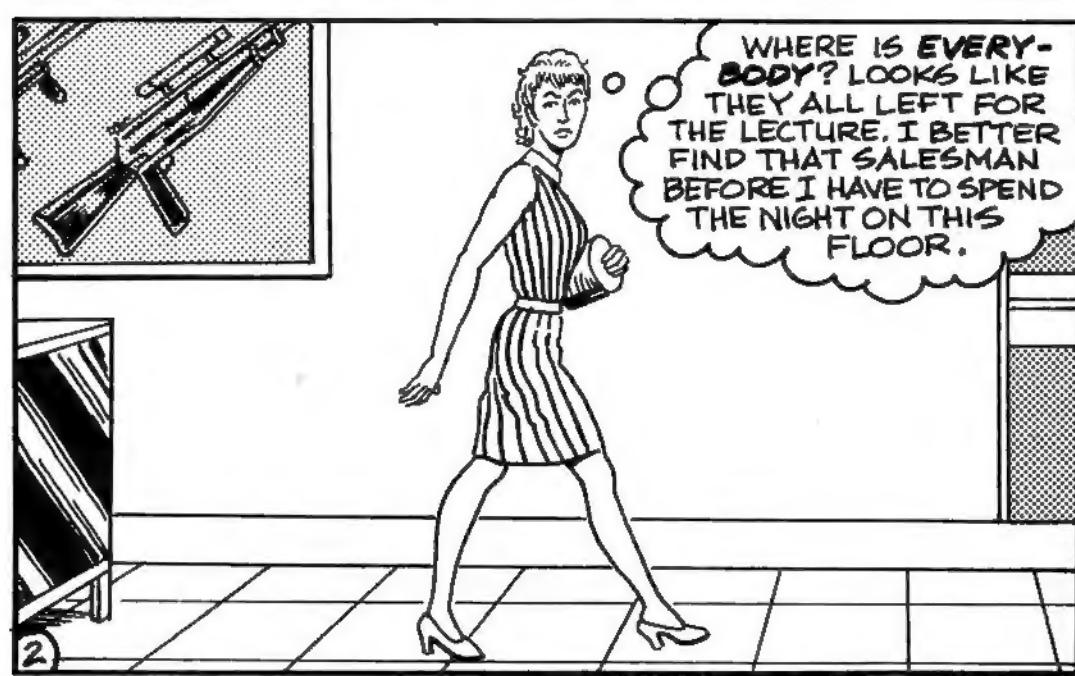
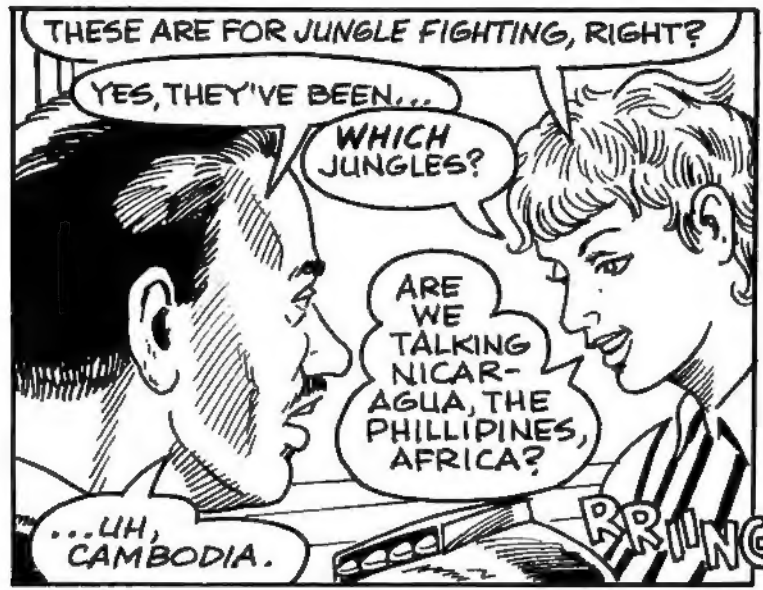
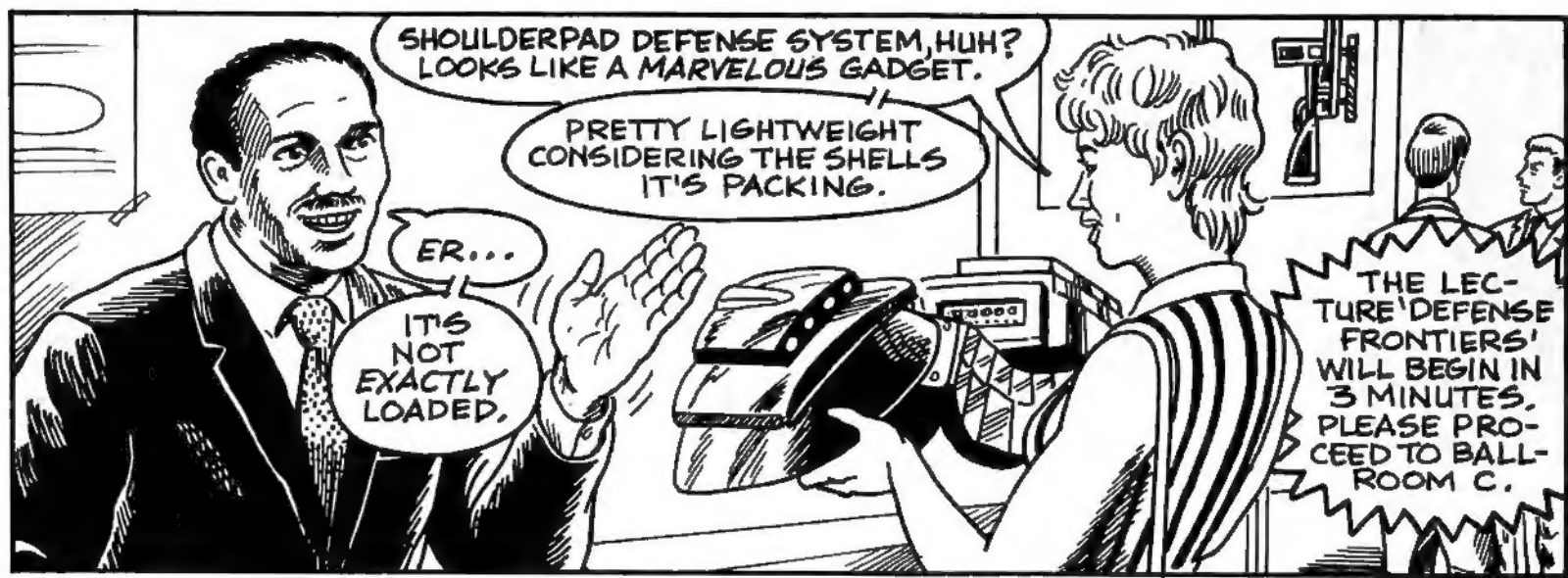
BUT THE BOSS ON-
LY EMPLOYS PEOPLE WITH
GOOD MEMORIES, AND
THEIR REPORTS ARE ALWAYS
CROSS-CHECKED. THIS BROAD
POPPED OUT AS BEING
WAY TOO CURIOUS ABOUT
UNDER-THE-TABLE DEAL-
INGS, SO WHAT DID
YOU FIND?

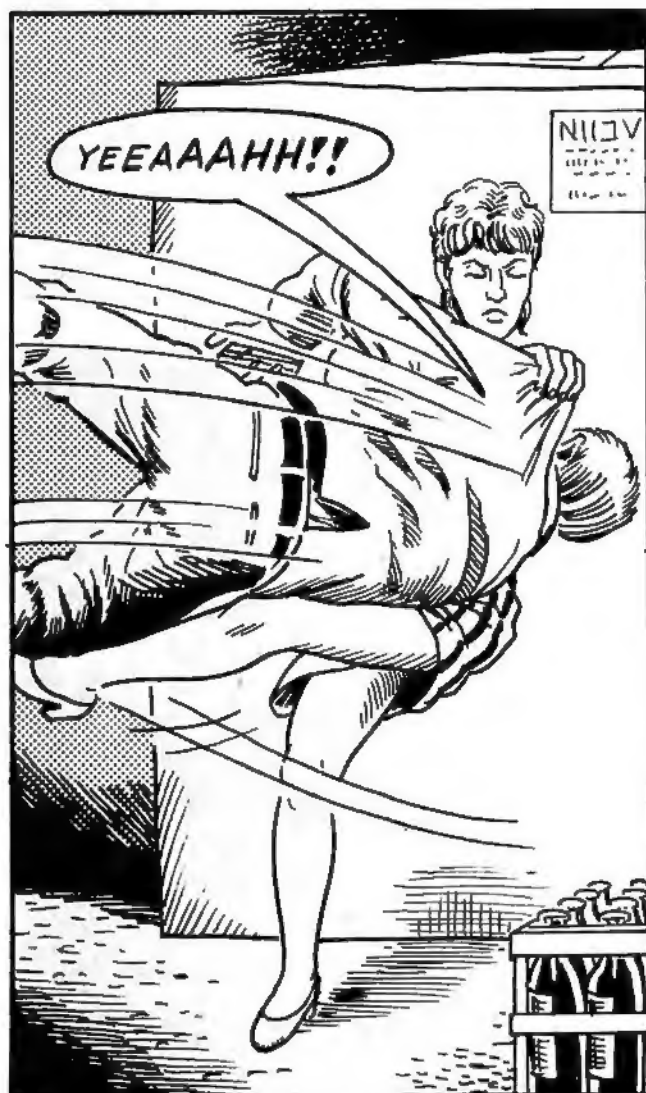
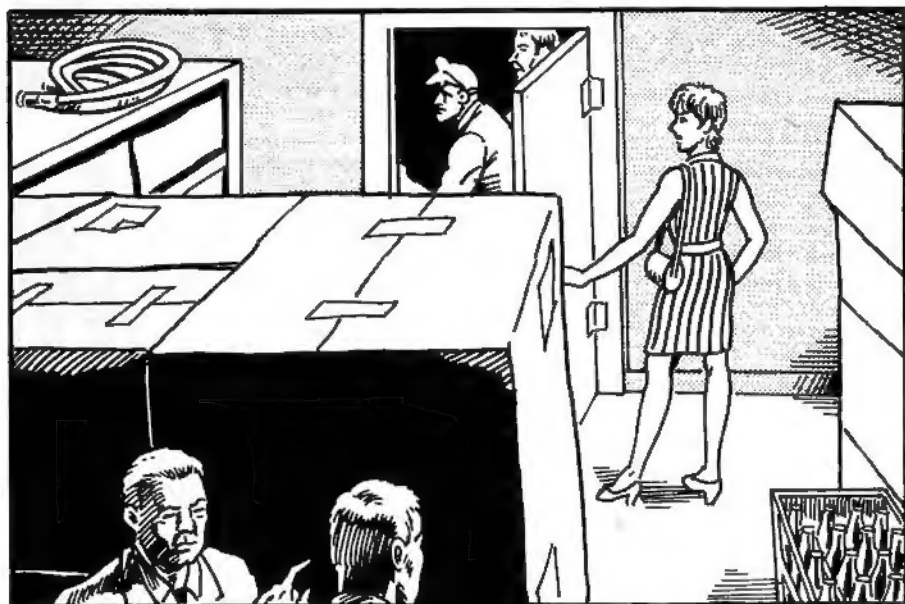


NO, WHEN THEY
WANT SOMETHING,
THEY BUY THE INFO.
I THINK SHE'S
AN AGENT.

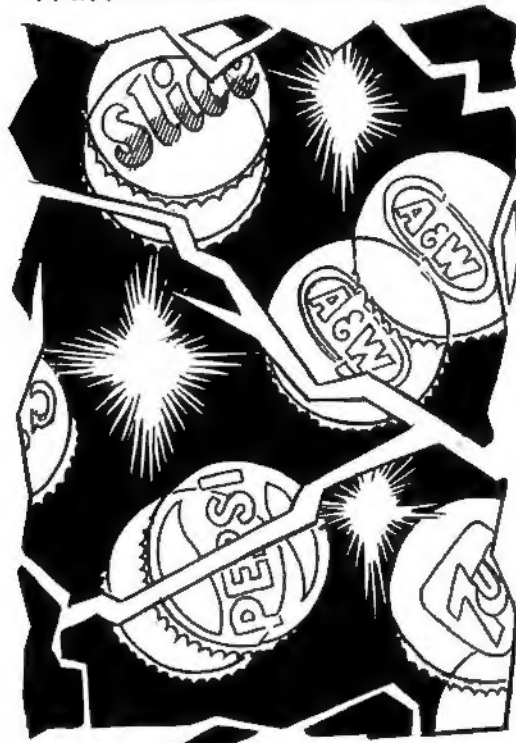
A FED?

NO,
THEY'RE
PAID
OFF. SOME
OTHER
GOVERN-
MENT--
WE'LL FIND
OUT.

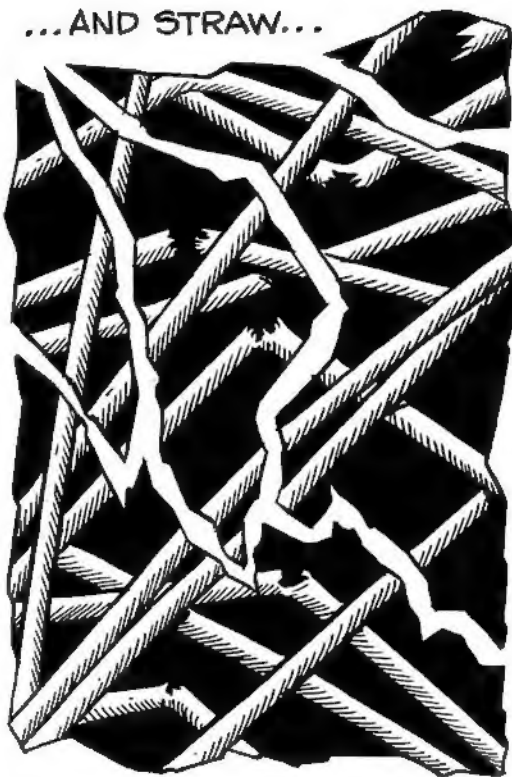




PAIN...UNENDURABLE PAIN...



...AND STRAW...



...HER FACE IS PRESSED
AGAINST STRAW...



...WAVES OF PAIN...



... A SOUR ANIMAL SMELL...



STEALTH

STORY & ART:
JOE ZABEL
INKS & LETTERS:
GARY DUMM



OOH...

...STOOD
UP TOO
SUDDENLY!

...DIZZY...



AAAGH!

COUGH!
COUGH!



I CAN
HARDLY
BREATHE!



OUCH! WHAT A
GOOSE-EGG!

NEVER LET ANYONE HIT
YOU OVER THE HEAD...

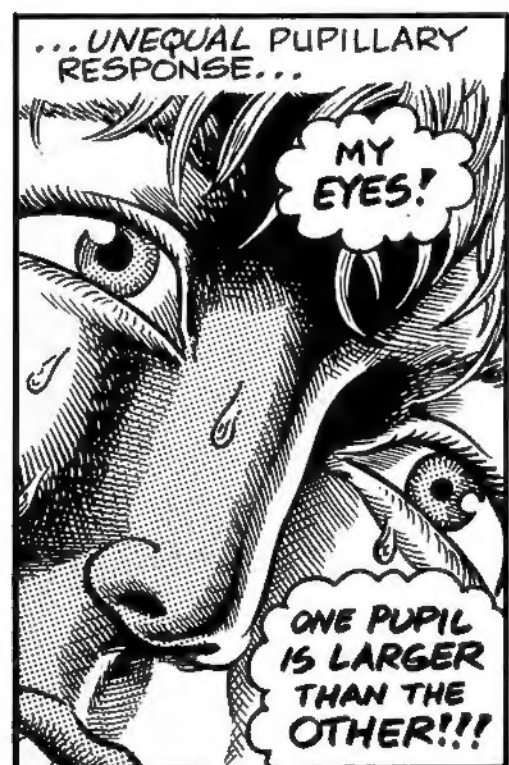


NERVE TISSUES AND BLOOD
VESSELS MAY BE SHEARED,
TORN OR RUPTURED... JAGGED
BONE FRAGMENTS MAY PIERCE
THE DURA MATTER OR
CEREBRAL CORTEX...



BLEEDING INSIDE THE SKULL
MAY PUT FATAL PRESSURE
ON THE BRAIN...

...HEMIPARESIS... DECORTICATE
OR DECEREBRATE POSTURING...



...UNEQUAL PUPILLARY
RESPONSE...

MY
EYES!

ONE PUPIL
IS LARGER
THAN THE
OTHER!!!



CALM DOWN!

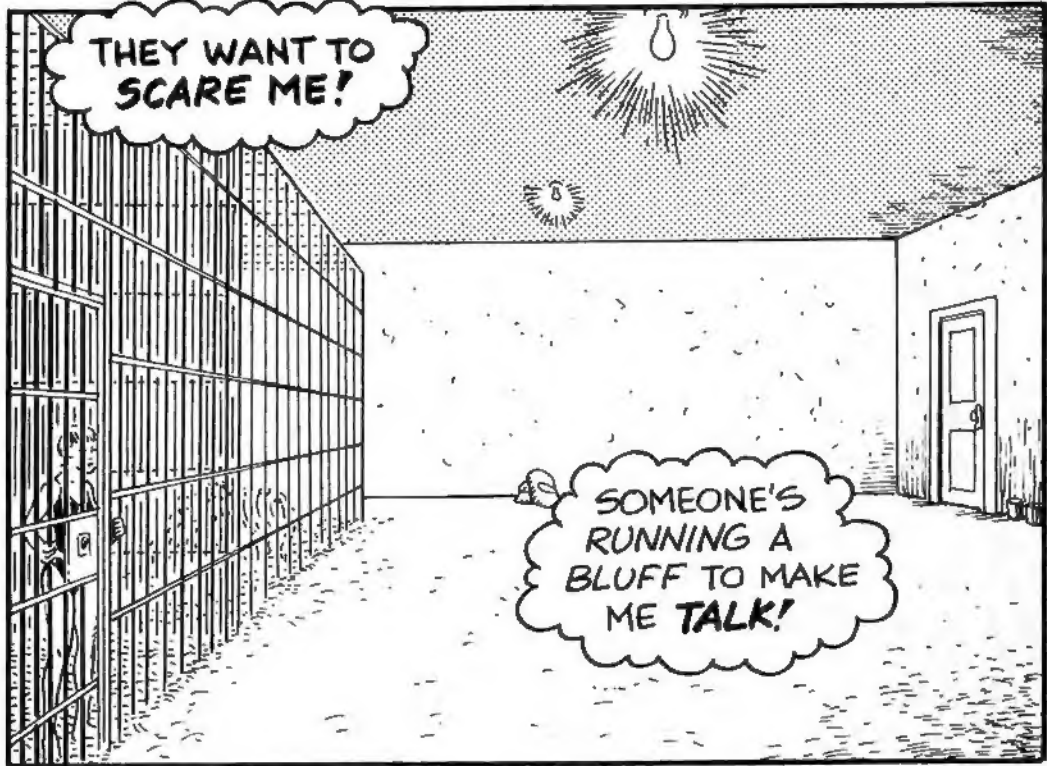
TEST YOUR
MEMORY...

I REMEMBER WHO
I 'REALLY' AM...

CAN'T REMEMBER
MY LATEST ALIAS -
BUT I'M ALWAYS
FORGETTING THAT.



THE LAST THING THAT
HAPPENED... FOREHEAD
RESTING ON BOTTLECAPS...
LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS...



THE GIRL HASN'T STIRRED FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, BUT FLETCHER WATCHES, INTENT.



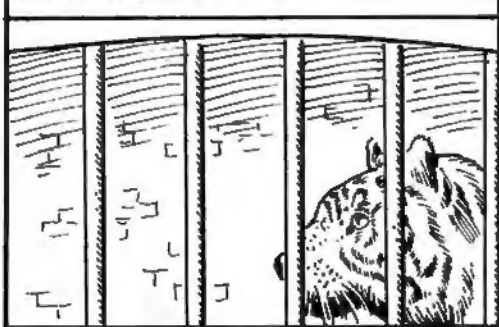
HE'S TAPING HER. HE SAVES TAPES OF ALL HIS OVERNIGHT GUESTS...



... EVERY MAN NEEDS A HOBBY!



HOW LUCKY HE IS THAT KRIEGER APPROACHED HIM!



HE CERTAINLY ENJOYS THE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE OF HOUSING KRIEGER'S MAGNIFICENT PET!

BEYOND THAT, HE HAS FOUND IN KRIEGER A COMRADE... A MAN AFTER HIS OWN HEART!



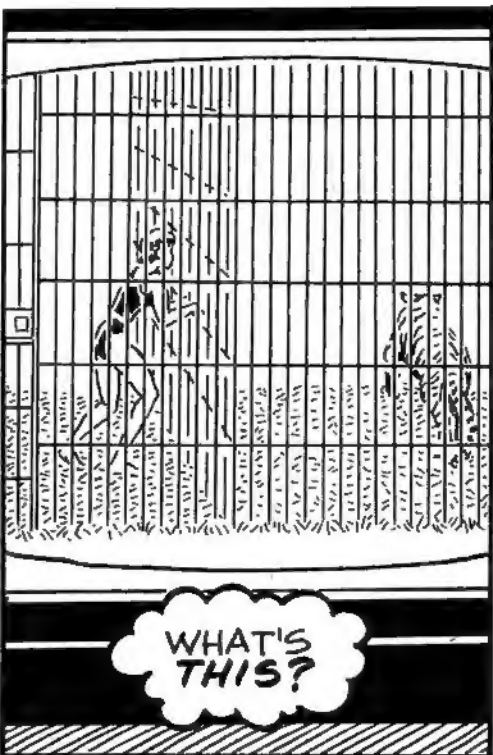
BENEATH THAT STOIC KRAUT EXTERIOR LIES THE MOST **PSYCHOPATHIC** INDIVIDUAL FLETCHER HAS EVER MET!



AN ACTION BY THE GIRL CATCHES HIS ATTENTION—



WHAT THE... SHE'S THROWING THE SHOE **BACK** TO THE TIGER'S SIDE!

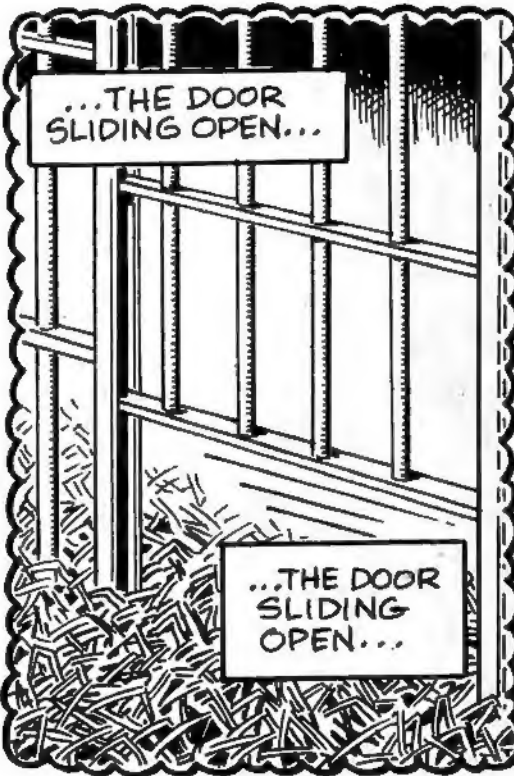
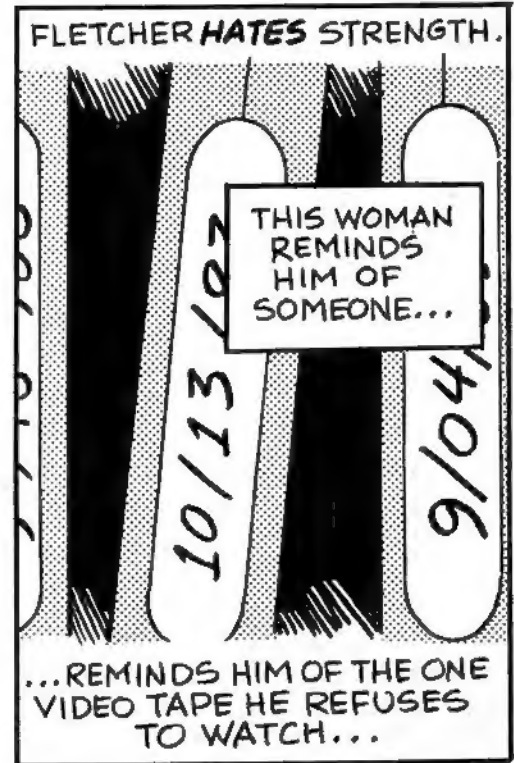
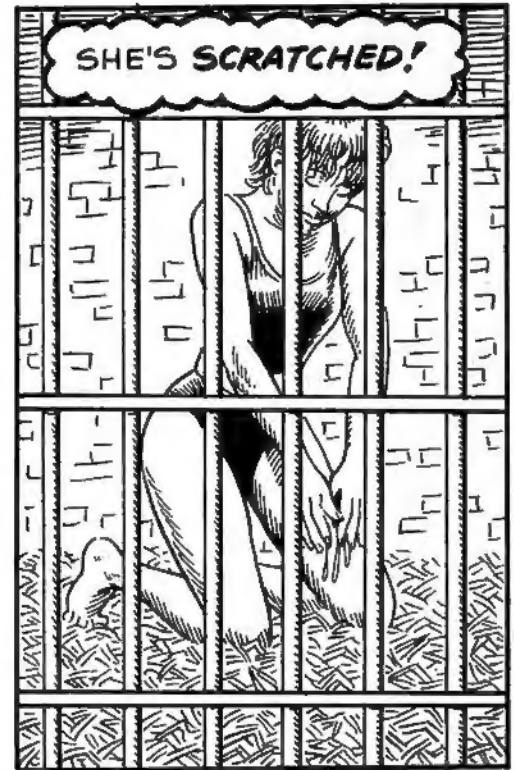
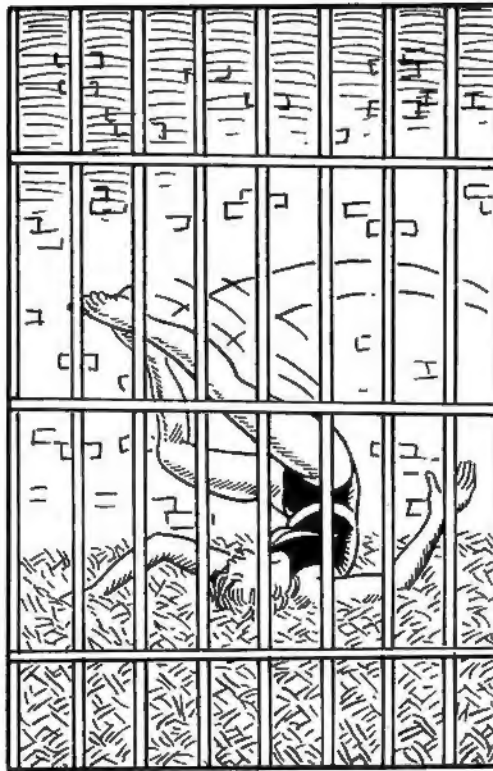
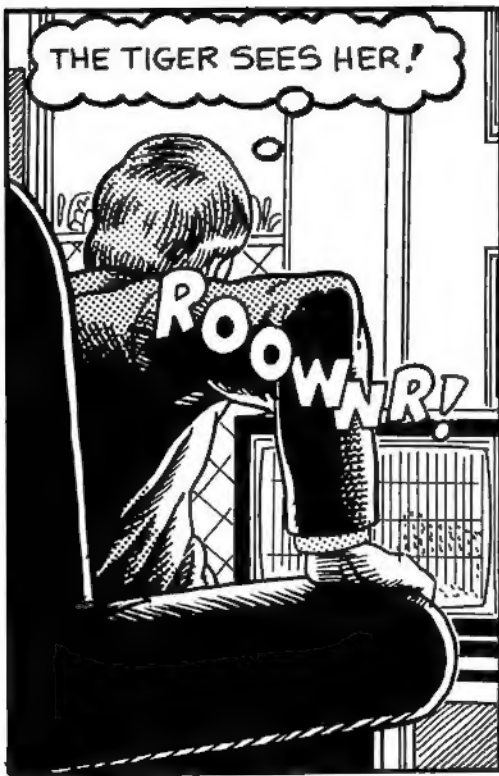


WHAT'S **THIS**?

SHE'S **TESTING** THE SLIDING DOOR!



BUT WHY?



EUPHRATES SAVOURS THE TASTE OF BLOOD. HE HAS LEARNED PATIENCE IN HIS YEARS OF CAPTIVITY.



HE WAS ALWAYS FASCINATED BY THE HUMANS...BY THEIR UNPREDICTABILITY.

BACK IN THE FOREST OF HIS BIRTH, THE OTHER TIGERS FEARED MEN, WITH THEIR GUNS AND THEIR FIRE... AND SO DID EUPHRATES...

'TIL THE DAY HE HAD A PAINFUL ENCOUNTER WITH A LUCKY PORCUPINE...



...LEAVING HIM TOO SLOW TO CATCH THE DEER...



...TOO CLUMSY TO RISK THE HORNS OF WARY BUFFALO!



AND JUST AS THE GNAWING
ACHE IN HIS CAVERNOUS GUT
BECAME UNBEARABLE...



HUMANS WERE PLENTIFUL,
STUPID PREY...WEAKLINGS!
THEY PANICKED WHEN ATTACKED!



THEY SEEMED TO HAVE LOST
THEIR INSTINCTIVE SENSE OF
CAUTION. THEY COULD BE EAS-
ILY STALKED, EVEN UPWIND!



...AND
THEIR
FLESH!



...THEIR FLESH
WAS DELICIOUS!

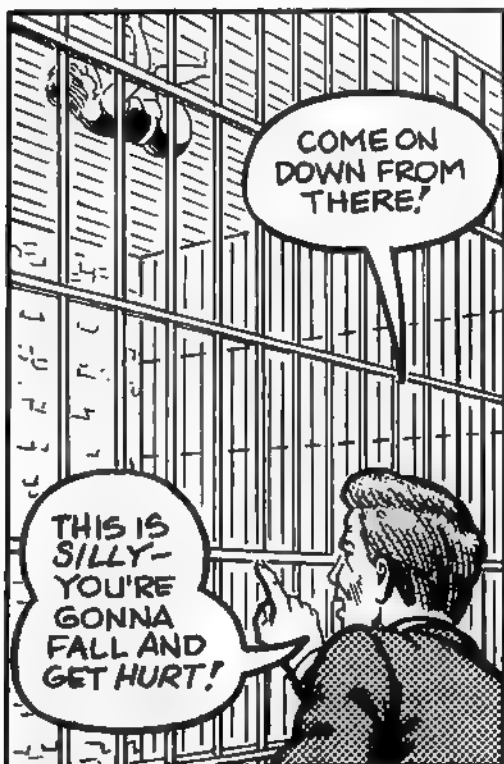
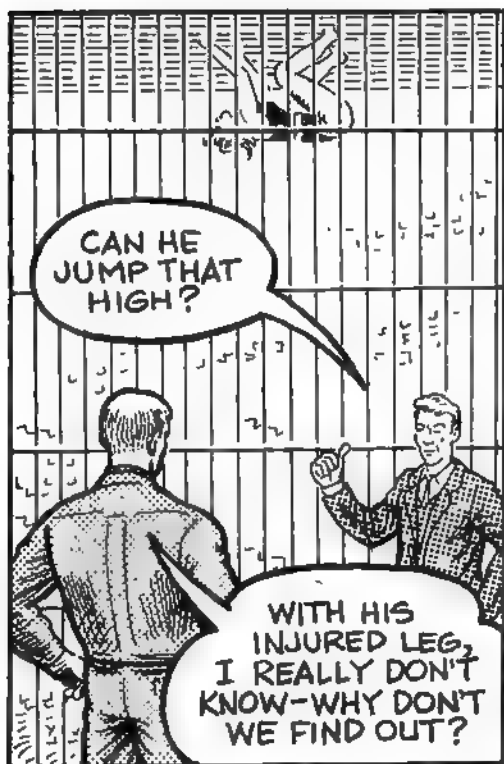
EUPHRATES HAD STUMBLLED
ONTO A WAY OF LIFE BOTH
EFFORTLESS AND GRATIFYING!
BUT THEN ONE DAY...

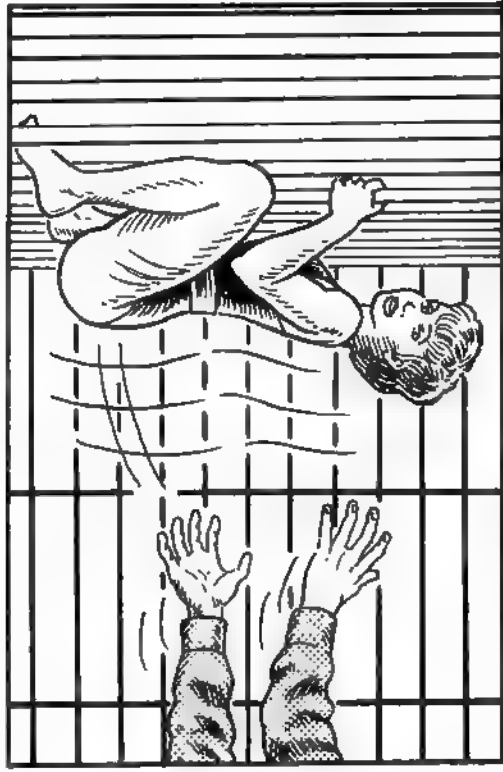
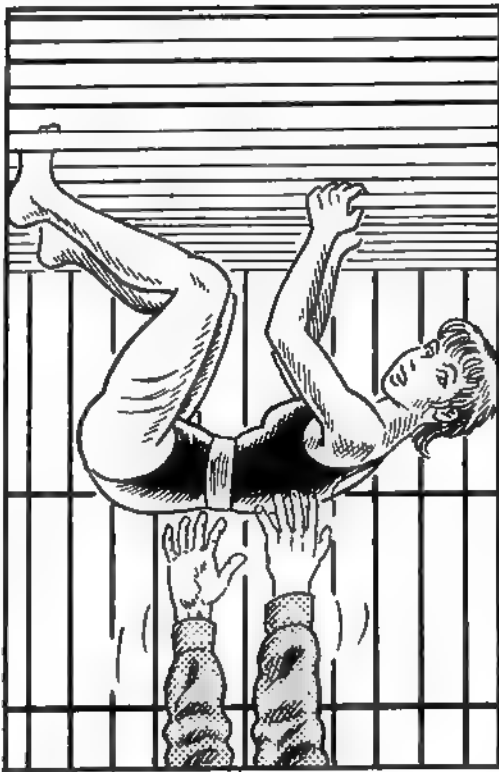
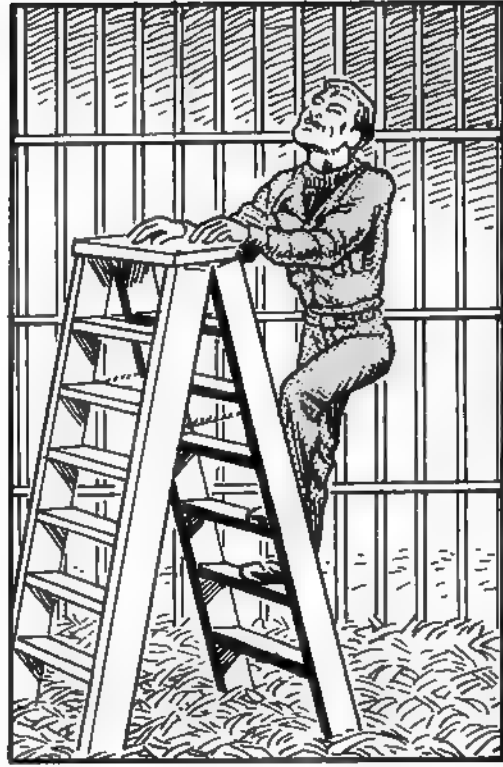
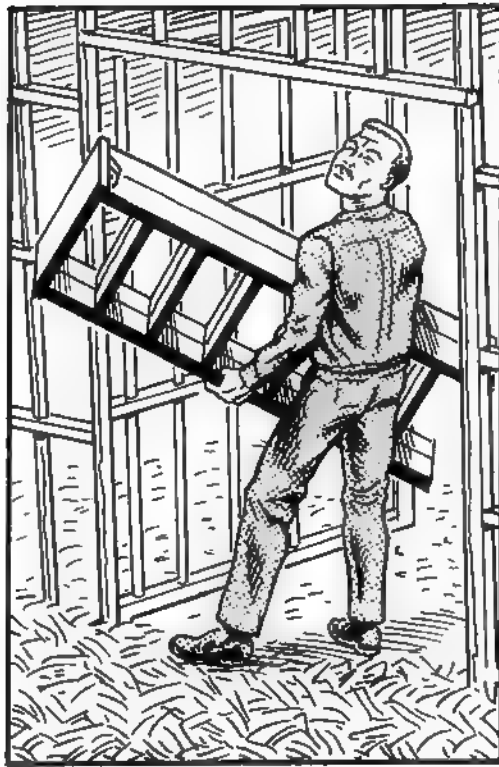
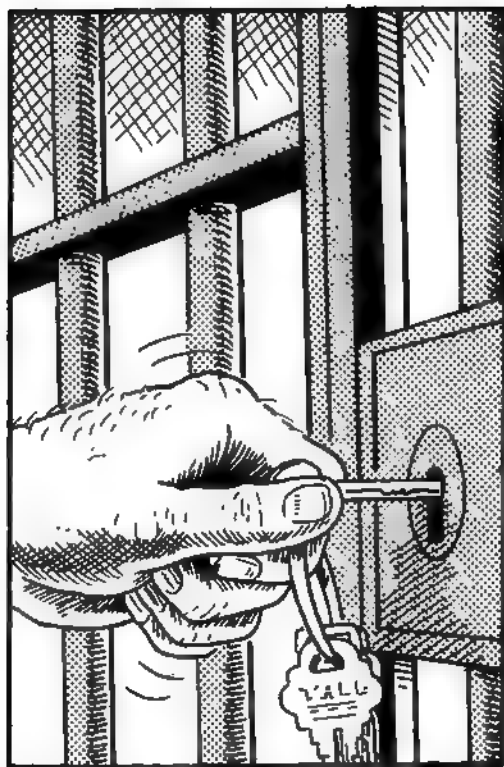


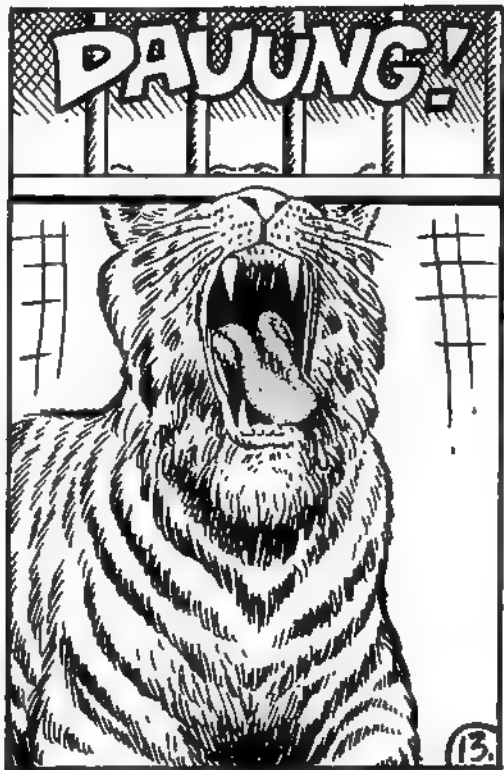
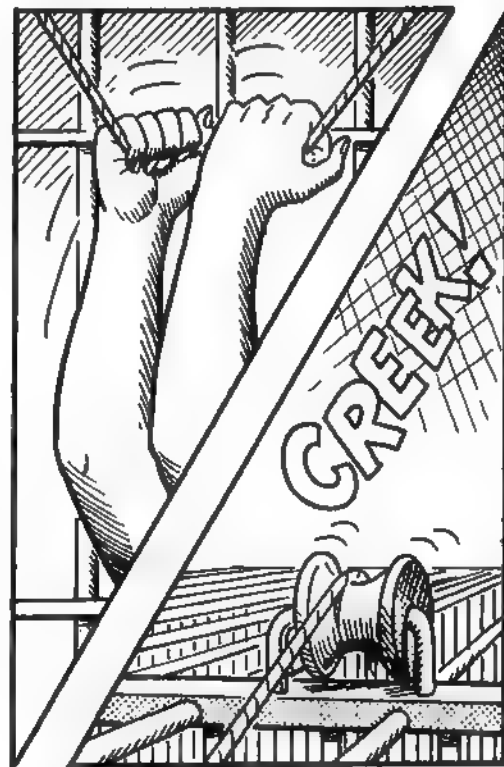
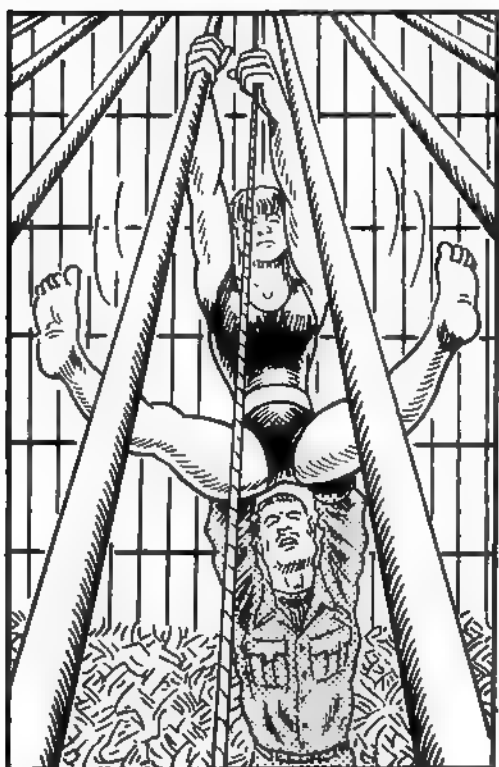
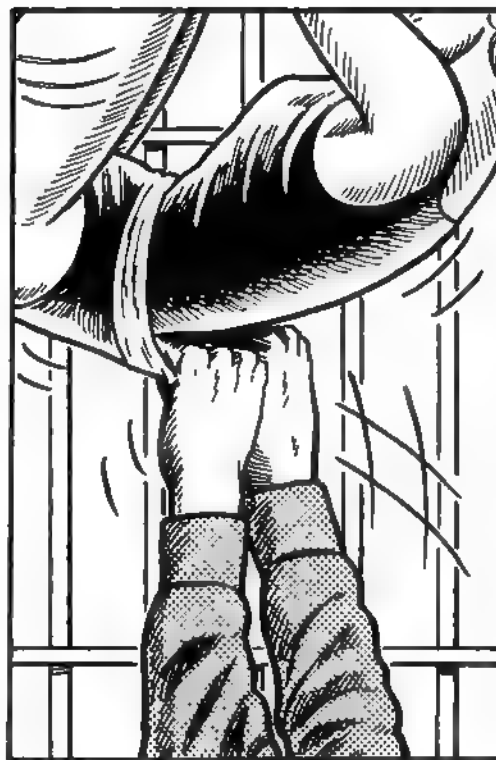
...THAT WAY OF LIFE CAME
ABRUPTLY TO AN END!



ROOARR!



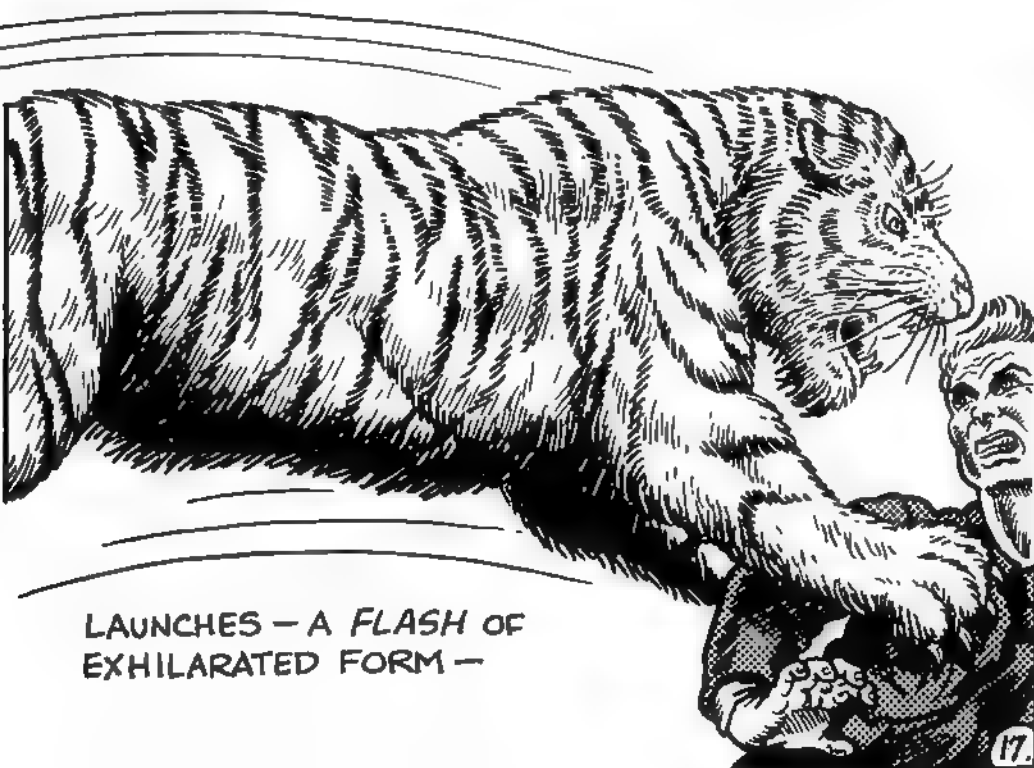
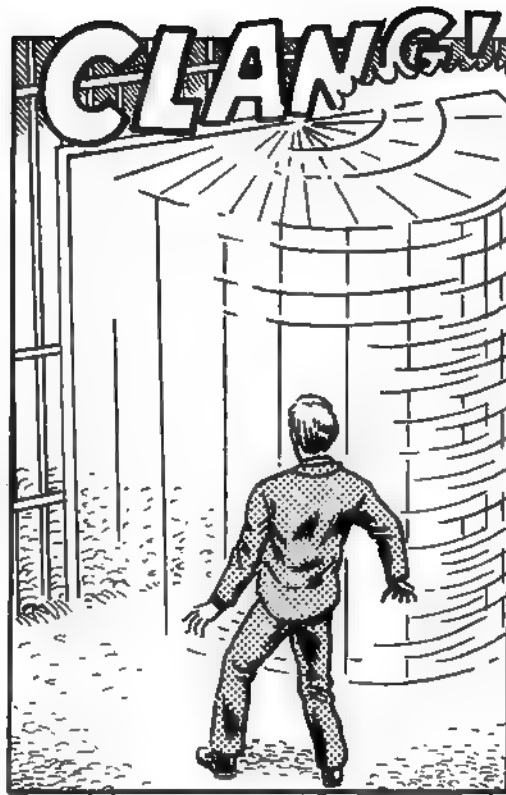
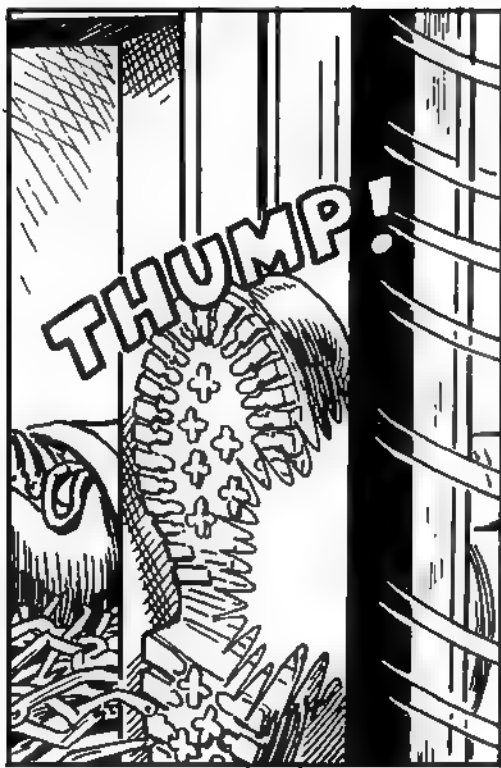


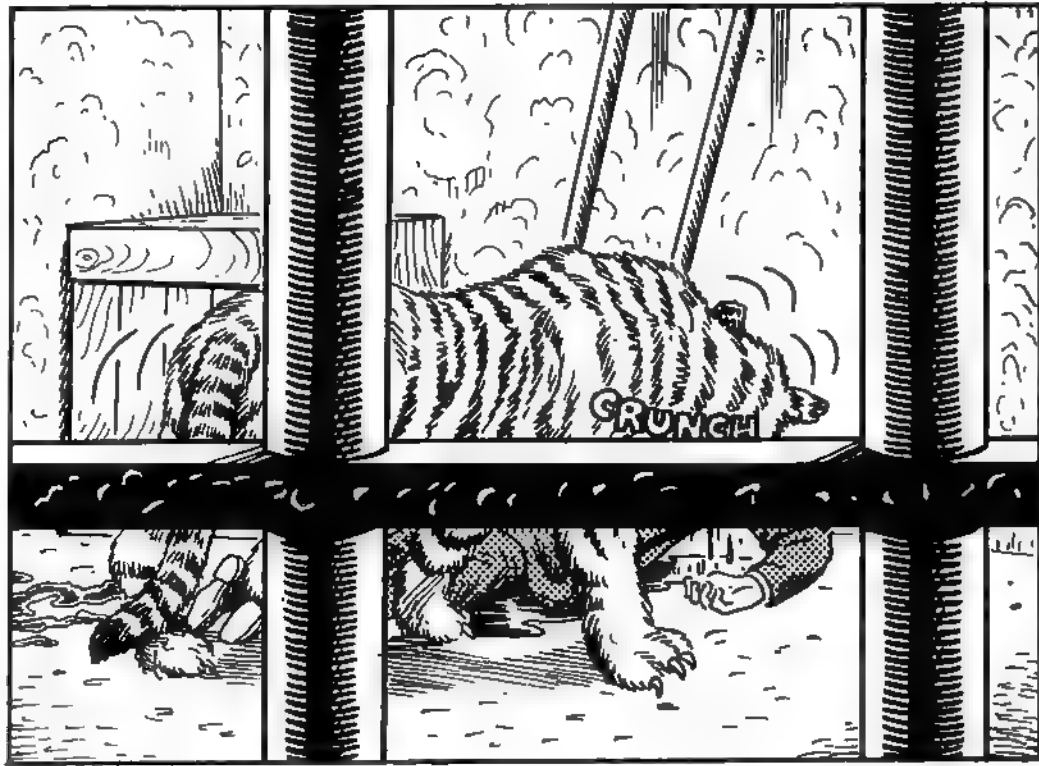




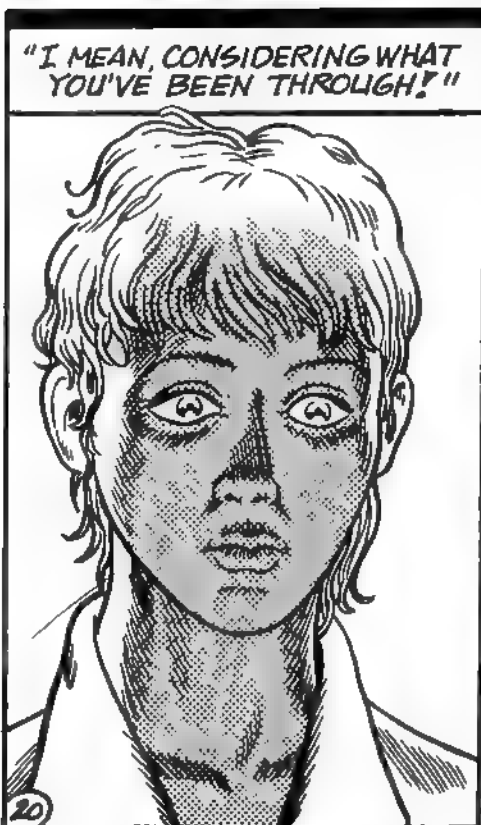
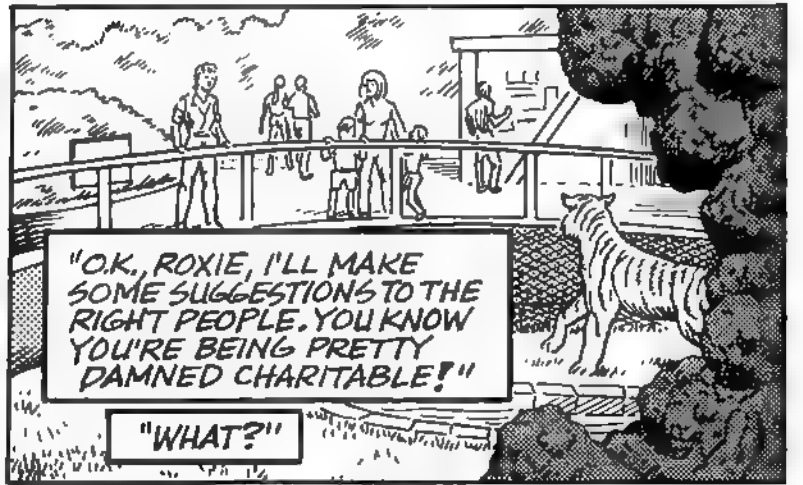
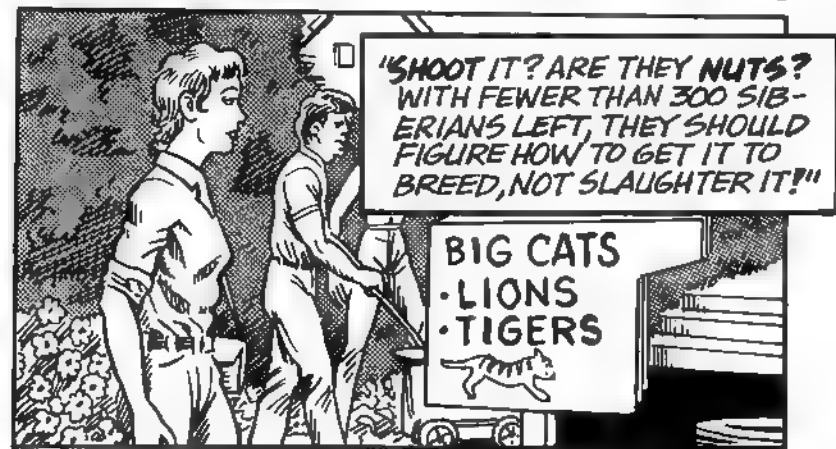
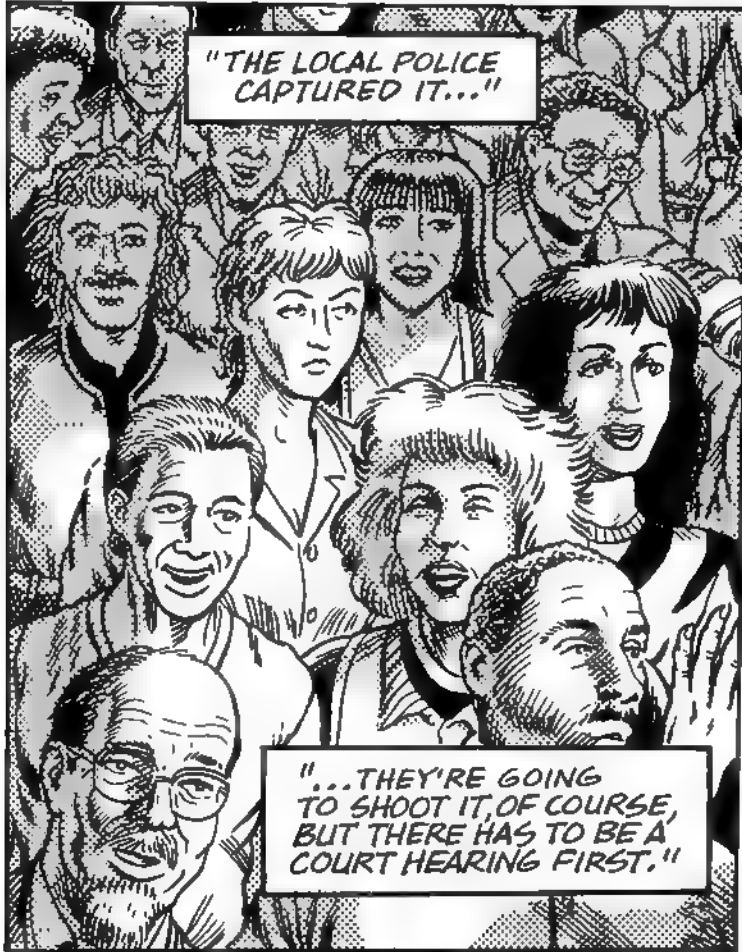
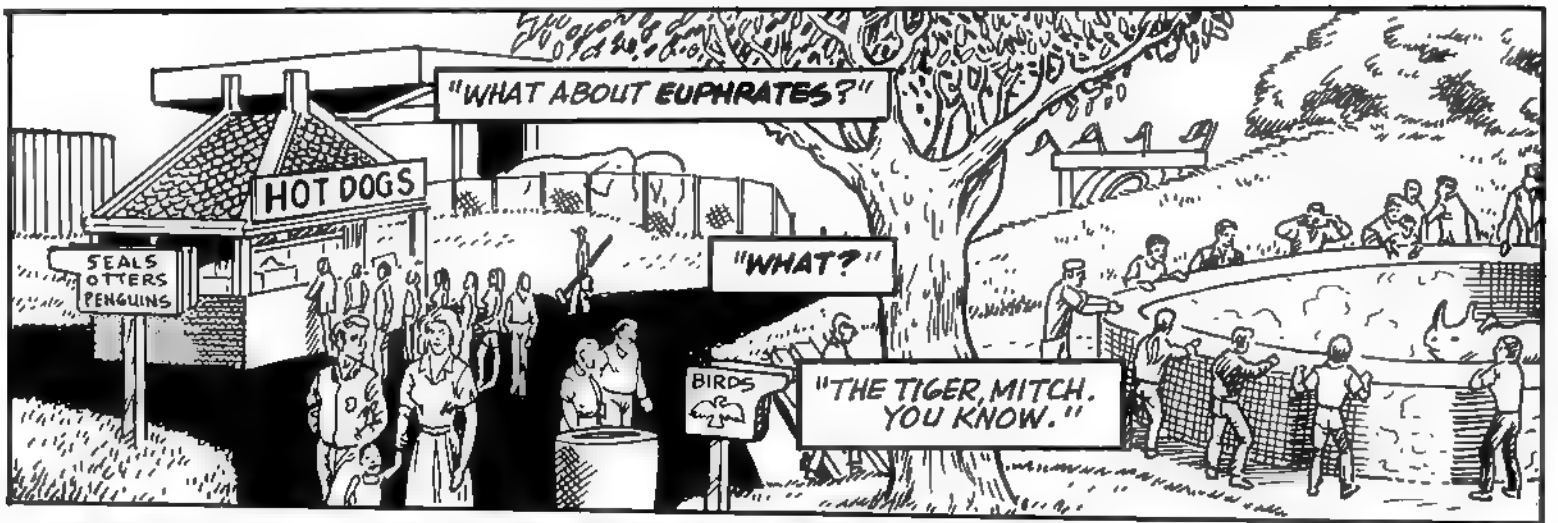











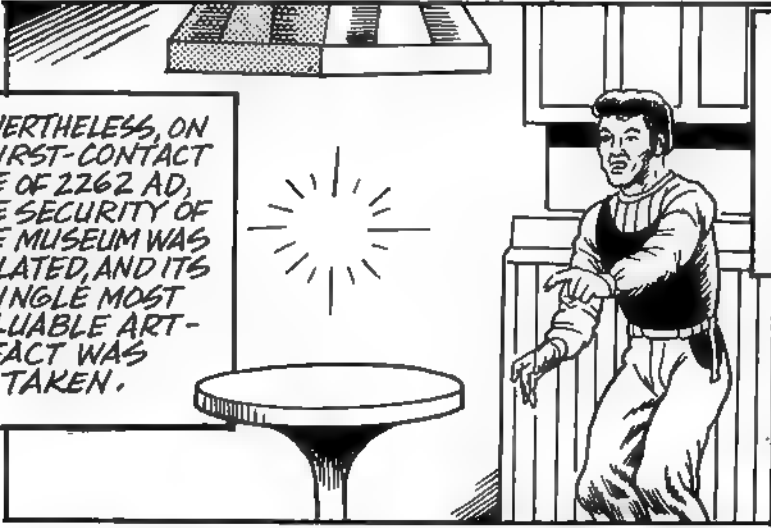




THE GALACTIC INSTITUTE IS, PERHAPS, THE FINEST SMALL MUSEUM OF INTERPLANETARY CULTURE ON TAU CETI. BUILT IN 2259 AD, IT IS AN ELEGANT HOME FOR SOME OF THE RAREST ARTIFACTS IN THE HISTORY OF SAPIENT LIFE.


THE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF MODERN SECURITY TECHNOLOGY: A KELDON MATRIX SHIELDS THE COMPLEX FROM TELEPORTATION BEAMS--ENERGY DAMPENERS PREVENT ENTRY TO THE GROUNDS BY HOVER DEVICES--THE STRUCTURE IS FULLY BLAST-PROOF AND DISINTEGRATION-PROOF.

WHAT'S MORE, THE GROUNDS ARE MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY BY A CLASS-9 SYNTHA-MIND.




A COSTLY INVESTIGATION FAILED TO SOLVE THE CASE. ONLY A FEW ANOMALOUS AND INCONCLUSIVE FACTS COULD BE COLLECTED.

NEVERTHELESS, ON FIRST-CONTACT EVE OF 2262 AD, THE SECURITY OF THE MUSEUM WAS VIOLATED, AND ITS SINGLE MOST VALUABLE ARTIFACT WAS TAKEN.



INVESTIGATORS SUSPECTED A NOTORIOUS PROFESSIONAL WHO ALONE HAD THE ABILITY TO EXECUTE SUCH AN INGENIOUS AND DIFFICULT HEIST.



SAID INDIVIDUAL HAD AN UNBREAKABLE ALIBI FOR THE TIME OF THE ROBBERY--A CAREFULLY MANUFACTURED ALIBI.

PARIS' KNIGHT

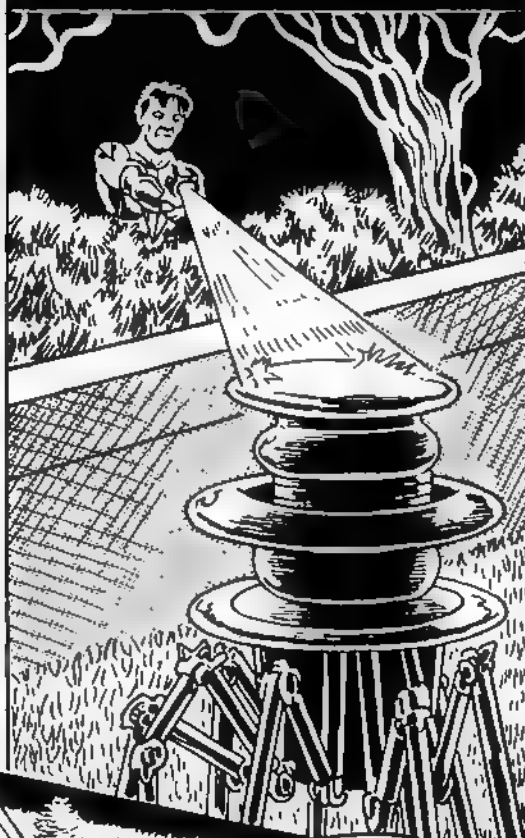
12:40 AM: THE PERPETRATOR SCALED THE SOUTH WALL, PROBABLY USING TACK-GLOVES.



12:42 AM: PULSED INFRARED DETECTED THE INTRUDER'S PRESENCE IN THE SCENIC GARDEN EAST.



12:47 AM: THE CYBER-GUARD'S MESSAGE BUFFER BECAME UN-ACCOUNTABLY JAMMED WITH ENCRYPTED DATA.



12:50 AM: FLARING OF A DECORATIVE TORCH FIXTURE TEMPORARILY WASHED THE SECURITY CAMERA.



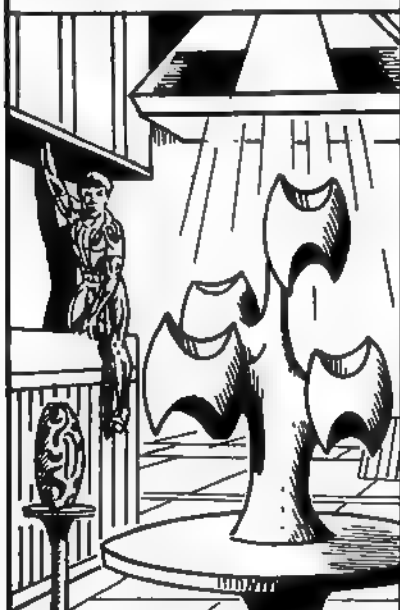
OTHER EVIDENCE EXTERIOR TO THE BUILDING WAS NEGLIGIBLE.



THE PERPETRATOR'S METHOD OF ENTERING THE MUSEUM REMAINS UNDER INVESTIGATION.



12:53 AM: THE PRICE-
LESS AQUILA ARABESQUE
WAS SHEATHED IN A
STATE-OF-THE-ART
SECURITY ENVELOPE.



... BUT THE PERP-
ETRATOR EVIDENTLY
KNEW DETAILS OF THE
MANUFACTURER'S
CONFIDENTIAL
TESTING DATA.



TREASURE IN HAND,
HE SUDDENLY RE-
ALIZED—



— THAT HE WASN'T
THE ONLY INTRUDER
THIS NIGHT.





1 AM: REMAINING AT THE SITE WAS ONE UNCONSCIOUS ERIDANIAN FELON.

MISSING WAS THE AQUILA ARABESQUE AND THE PERPETRATOR, A.K.A. PARIS KNIGHT.

3 AM: CONJECTURE SUGGESTS THAT ON THE SAME EVENING, KNIGHT VISITED THE FINGER WHO'D DOUBLE-SOLD THE JOB...



...ONLY TO FIND THE MAN ALREADY EXPERIENCING ERIDANI REVENGE.



4:30 AM: KNIGHT FENCED THE FIGURINE THROUGH AN UNDERGROUND CONNECTION.

THE NEXT DAY, KNIGHT LAUNDERED THE TAKE BY HIS USUAL METHOD.



FIRST, HE COVERED SEVERAL CANVAS BOARDS WITH RANDOMLY APPLIED PAINT...

NEXT, HE SUMMONED A LEGITIMATE ART DEALER, WHO EAGERLY ACQUIRED THE LATEST PARIS KNIGHT ORIGINALS.



LATER THAT DAY, A COLLECTOR PURCHASED SEVERAL PIECES, PAYING CASH.

FINALLY KNIGHT DISCARDED THE DISGUISE AND DESTROYED THE PAINTINGS.

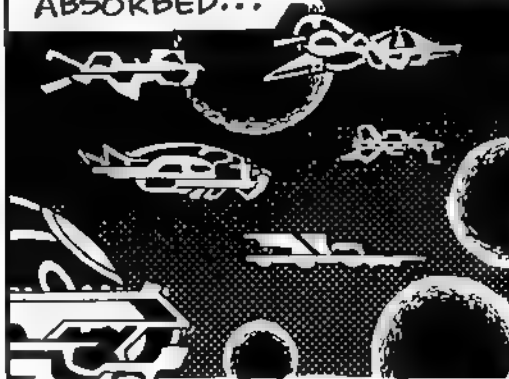


THE SCHEME HAD WORKED SO WELL OVER THE YEARS THAT BONIFIED COLLECTORS HAD BEGUN INVESTING IN KNIGHT'S ART.



... ALLOWING KNIGHT TO ENJOY THE REWARDS OF HIS PROFESSION AND THE SATISFACTION DERIVED FROM A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION.

TO UNDERSTAND KNIGHT, ONE MUST GRASP THE SITUATION OF THE LATTER 21ST CENTURY. HUMAN CIVILIZATION HAD BEEN ABSORBED...

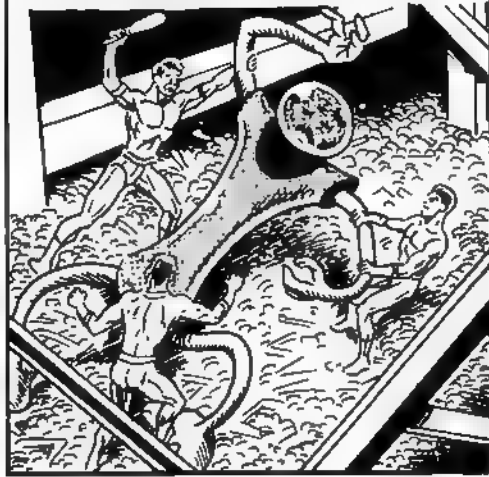


...BY THE INTERSTELLAR FEDERATION OF ALIEN RACES.

SUBMERGED IN A GALAXY-SPANNING CULTURE ADVANCED BEYOND HUMAN KEN, THE STATUS AND DIGNITY OF MANKIND SUFFERED ALMOST TOTAL COLLAPSE.

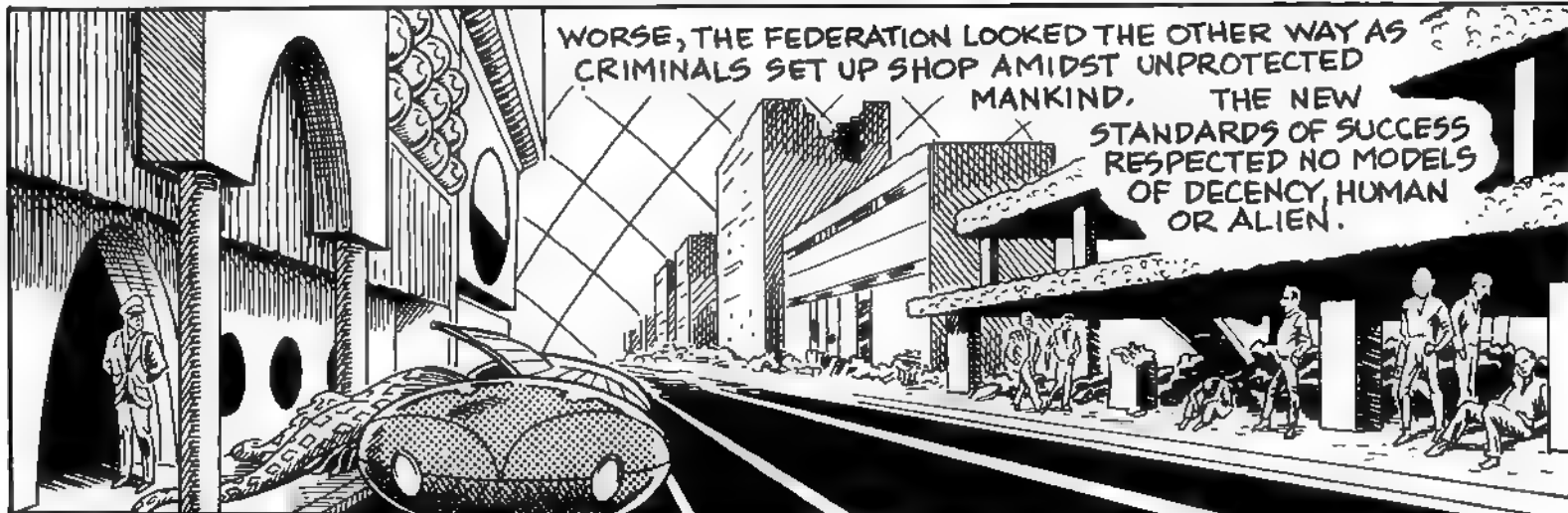


POWERLESSNESS, FRUSTRATION, AND CULTURAL CONFLICT CONTRIBUTED TO AN ATMOSPHERE OF VIOLENT TENSION.



WORSE, THE FEDERATION LOOKED THE OTHER WAY AS CRIMINALS SET UP SHOP AMIDST UNPROTECTED MANKIND.

THE NEW STANDARDS OF SUCCESS RESPECTED NO MODELS OF DECENCY, HUMAN OR ALIEN.



THUS AN UNDERGROUND SUBCULTURE DEVELOPED, WITH ITS OWN MORES, INSTITUTIONS, AND REVOLUTIONARY ASPIRATIONS. IN SUCH A SUBCULTURE, A MAN LIKE KNIGHT, AN INDEPENDENT OPERATOR WHO PREYED ON THE WEALTHY, WAS REVERED AS A HERO.



BUT KNIGHT WAS INDIFFERENT TO HIS ADMIRERS. HE WAS CONCERNED WITH THE SKILLFUL PURSUIT OF HIS PROFESSION, NOT ITS REVOLUTIONARY CONSEQUENCES.

IN ANOTHER CONTEXT, HE MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP AND INVENTION TO SOCIETY. BUT THE ONLY CHALLENGE FACING HIM NOW WAS THE PLANNING OF HIS NEXT HEIST.





HEY, PARIS!

JAMAL!



SO WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO LATELY? I'VE HEARD LOTS OF CONJECTURE...

THAT'S ALL IT IS. I'VE BEEN MINDING MY OWN BUSINESS, OBEYING THE LAW...

...PROFITING FROM THE FRUITS OF MY LABORS.

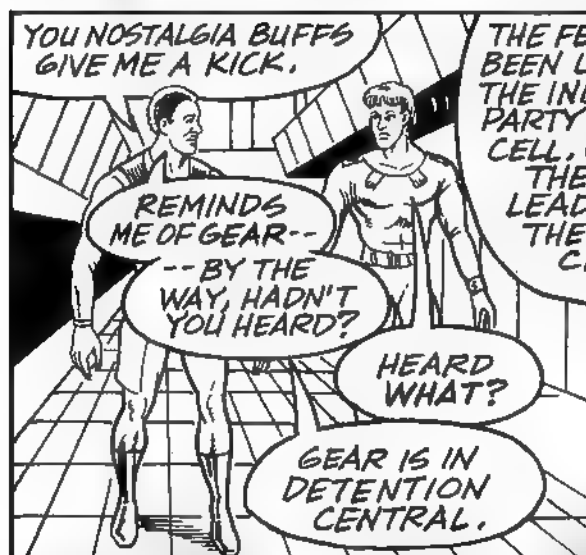


SERIOUSLY I DON'T NEED THE MONEY ANYMORE, BUT I KEEP ACTIVE.

IT'S AN INTERESTING BUSINESS.

THE TROUBLE IS, THERE JUST ISN'T MUCH WORTH TAKING ANYMORE.

STUFF CAN BE FABRICATED IN A SECOND. NOW DATA, THAT'S REALLY VALUABLE -- BUT THAT'S NOT MY LINE, EITHER.



YOU NOSTALGIA BUFFS GIVE ME A KICK.

REMINDS ME OF GEAR--
--BY THE WAY, HADN'T YOU HEARD?

HEARD WHAT?

GEAR IS IN DETENTION CENTRAL.

THE FEDERATION'S BEEN UNRAVELING THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY CELL BY CELL. GEAR IS THE FIRST LEADER WHO THEY CAN'T CRACK!



TOUGH OLD BIRD! GEAR TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW! LOOKS LIKE A GOOD TIME OF NIGHT TO VISIT DETENTION CENTRAL.

DETENTION CENTRAL.



COME ON, PARIS, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PLANS--YOU HAVEN'T EVEN CASSED THE JOINT.

RIGHT, NOW POSITION YOURSELF OVER THERE, GIVE ME TWO MINUTES BEFORE YOU SET THEM OFF.

LET'S GO.



KRAK
POP
POP



YOU GOT AN
I.D., BUDDY?

O.K.

THE D.C.'S
DEFENSE
SYSTEMS
WERE SA-
BOTAGE-
PROOFED...



...ON THE
THEORY OF 'USE 'EM
BEFORE YOU LOSE
'EM', A SET-UP
WHICH WAS IDEAL
FOR THIS SA-
BOTEUR.



RED
ALERT!
RED
ALERT!

WE'RE UNDER
ATTACK!



WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

GATARAN SHIPS ARE HOVERING, READY TO ATTACK! WE'VE GOT TO EVACUATE THE PRISONERS TO THE LOWER LEVELS.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, SOLDIER?

OPENING THE LOWER LEVELS ... PRISONERS ARE QUEUING UP IN THE COURTYARD!

BUT...

YOU DON'T HAVE THE AUTHORITY ... OPEN THIS GATE AND LET ME TAKE CARE OF IT!

WHOK!

BACK OFF, LADIES -- I'M ONE OF THE INSURGENTS. SOMEBODY GET GEAR OVER HERE, QUICK!

YOU GOT IT, PAL.

I FIGURED IT WAS EITHER ARMAGEDDON OR YOU, PARIS!

COME ON, GET INTO THIS GUY'S UNIFORM.

OUTSIDE...

PARIS YOU'RE A LIFE SAVER! TELL YOU WHAT...

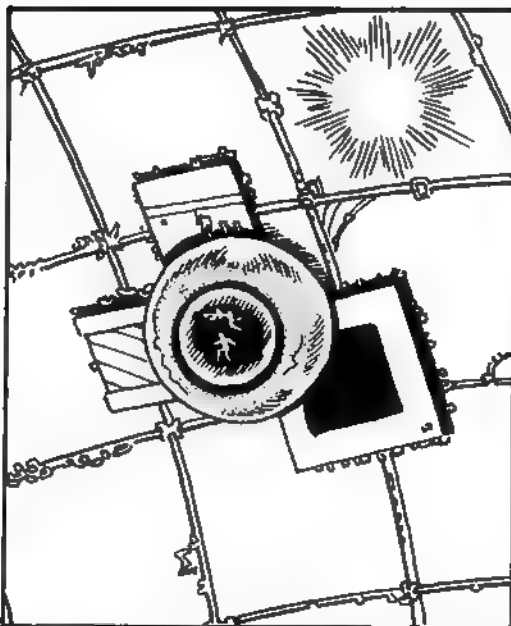
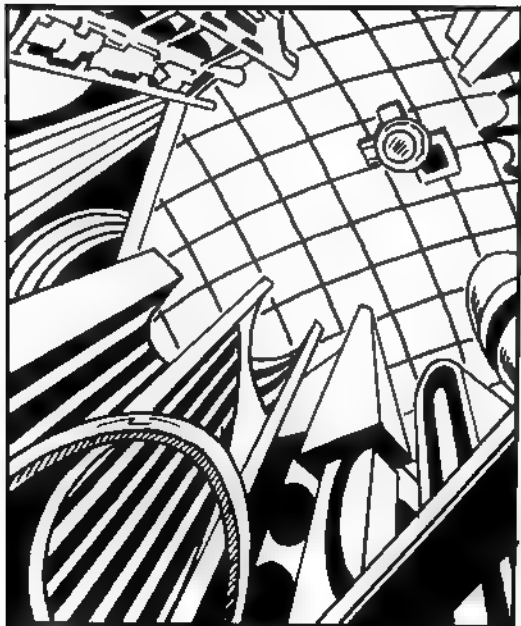
...I CAN FINGER A JOB FOR YOU, GRATIS.

I'M GAME.

GROAN...

HURRY! HE'S STARTING TO HEMORRHAGE!

I'M TAKING THIS GUY TO A SURG-IVAC!



MEANWHILE...

WE'RE STARTING TO REACH
THE CURVE—NOT AS
STEEP, EASIER TO
CLIMB.

SOME LOCAL
FAUNA CLINGING
TO THE DOME TO
MY RIGHT.

A MAINTENANCE
ROBOT
APPROACHING...

STRINK!

PULSED
THE
CRITTER!

ZTSEE!

UH-OH,
LOOK OUT!

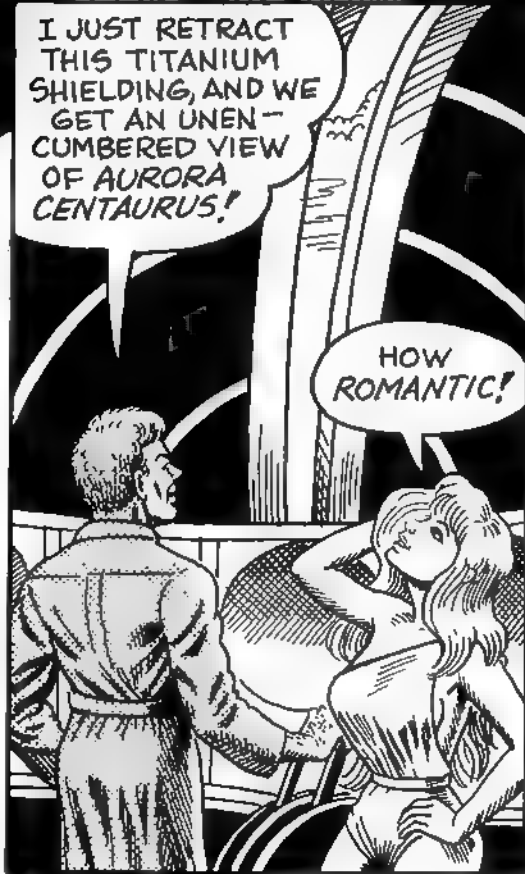
HE'S AIMIN'
AT US!

KKHEEO!

AAEEYYAAA!

UUGH!

OKAY, I
GOT AHOLD
OF AN OUT-
CROPPING BUT
THE 'BOT'S STILL
COMING.





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